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ABSTRACT

A study was designed to compare traditional paper-and-pencil survey methods with several electronic alternatives, but several of the electronic approaches had to be eliminated because of hardware and software problems. The study was revised to compare paper-and-pencil and Web-based surveys. Two other pilot tests, similar to the initial study, are also described. Many software difficulties were encountered in implementing the Web-based survey, but a survey about "customer satisfaction" was eventually produced in conventional and Web-based forms. Control (traditional) and experimental (Web-based) groups of 78 principals each were asked to respond to the surveys. Only 76 principals responded, with 29 of these using the Web-based version. Nevertheless, 21 of these 29 responses were received before there were any responses to the traditional survey. Most respondents approved of the idea of electronic surveying in spite of the technical difficulties. The other two pilot studies, one asking principals about block scheduling and one studying the ability of students to respond to an electronic survey, also showed favorable responses and very quick reply time. An appendix contains exhibits of materials used in the studies. (Contains 14 references.) (SLD)

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NAVIGATING ELECTRONIC SURVEY METHODS: THREE PILOT STUDIES

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Paper presented at the 28th Annual Meeting of the
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NAVIGATING ELECTRONIC SURVEY RESEARCH METHODS: THREE PILOT STUDIES

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Introduction

Since 1996 and the pioneering efforts of a few market research concerns (Kottler, 1998), interest in the use of the Internet as a vehicle for survey research has increased dramatically. For observers like Dillman (1998), such interest is a concomitant of a general methodological trend away from interviewer-controlled and towards self-administered surveys of all types. Then too, the size of the Internet community is growing and its composition becoming more representative of the general populace. According to a recent report appearing in *USA Today* (Sefton, 2000), the number of this nation's Internet users has shot up to 106 million or slightly more than 52% of the total population of American adults. While men remain a slight majority and Black Americans are still underrepresented, the Angus Reid Group projects not only that the Internet gender gap will disappear by the end of the year 2000 but also that "the number of new users from the baby boomer generation will surpass new teen and young adult users for the first time" and that "[h]ouseholds with children will also log on in greater numbers than ever before" (Nua Ltd., 2000). Clearly, the time when the Internet may be used as a medium for querying more than special populations with unusual talents and unique interests -- heretofore the typical targets of web- and email-based research (see, for example, Farmer, 1998) -- is drawing nearer.

Moreover, heightened enthusiasm for online surveys has also been sparked by an increasing number of firms offering technical services, off-the-shelf software packages, or -- as the case of SPSS/MR -- both, in order to make what once was an involved and daunting task one much less opaque and easier to achieve. Because typical web pages are simply "served up" to the viewer, the creator of such pages has only to know enough HTML (Hypertext Markup Language) to construct a readable and aesthetically pleasing facade. However, because so-called Internet or web "forms" are genuinely interactive -- meaning that they both accept and process data input from the user -- an additional layer of complexity is involved by way of some back-end programming. To work, such programs or scripts (i.e., executable computer code commonly known as "cgi-bin" files) call not only for more than just a passing acquaintance with a specific scripting language -- ordinarily but not necessarily the UNIX-compatible PERL -- but also for freer access to and increased demands upon the so-called web "server."

Given these two sets of obstacles, use of the Internet as a data collection tool seemed out of reach for all the most accomplished and outfitted researcher until a number of firms began developing solutions to what were essentially problems of technical expertise on the one hand and problems of control on the other. Providing software that automates the creation of back-end executable code and/or technical consulting for custom tailored solutions, many firms have now rendered the programming issue largely moot, opening the door to many more web surveys, more efficiently executed. Control-related issues have been similarly dispatched, with many firms offering clients access to a remote server where the survey may be hosted and the results processed and stored. While the level of costs incurred are typically commensurate with the additional sorts of services involved, even firms producing off-the-shelf survey solutions include data processing and a modicum of storage on their own servers in the cost of the software. Under this arrangement, individuals having only an email account and the usual user privileges afforded by commercials ISPs (i.e., Internet Service Providers) can be up and hosting web and email surveys

Yet, in the final analysis, it is largely because of a host of presumed advantages that has led many an interested researcher to consider the use of the Internet as a viable alternative to more traditional modes of survey administration. A tireless promoter of what he refers to "an unprecedented tool for data collection," one such researcher -- W. C. Schmidt (1997a)-- has not only offered a number of position papers and technical briefs to the social science community on electronic surveying, he has also made available to colleges and university a free-of-charge, Java-based utility -- WWW Survey Assistant --that simplifies and customizes the creation of web-based forms and accompanying cgi-scripts (1997b). If straying at times into hyperbole, his comments are indicative of the many claims advanced To begin with, notes Schmidt (1997a),

> The costs in terms of both time and money ... are low compared with the costs associated with conventional surveying methods. The data entry stage is eliminated for the survey administrator, and software can ensure that the data acquired from participants is free from common entry errors. Importantly, web surveys can interactively provide participants with customized feedback . These features come at the price of ensuring that appropriately written software manages the data collection process. Although the potential for missing data, unacceptable responses , duplicate submissions, and web abuse exist, measures can be taken when creating the survey software to minimize the frequency and negative consequences of such instances. (p. 274)

To determine the authenticity of claims like Schmidt's, a project was designed to compare traditional paper-and-pencil methods with several electronic alternatives. When several of

these alternatives were ruled out either because of known incompatibilities with the organization's email system, variation in the kinds and configurations of computer workstations across the organization, or variation in the computer literacy of the group being surveyed, the competing methods were limited to only two: the paper-and-pencil "control" and the web-based "experimental." The purpose of the bulk of this paper is to outline the results of this test. In an addendum, two other pilot studies subsequent to the first are discussed, these also employing electronic methods, but with no or only minor comparative intent.

Review of Relevant Literature

The rapid rate of change in Internet technology coupled with the equally rapid and ongoing evolution in the membership the online community tend to make most studies obsolete by the time they reach publication. However, there is a small body of published literature that is concerned with utility of email surveys and that is mostly characterized by equivocal findings and equivocal conclusions. Two 1995 studies by Metha and Sividas and Tse et al. independently compared email and postal surveys in different settings. Where the former found that email surveys were marked by quicker return, better quality of response, and a rate of return to comparable to postal surveys, the latter conducted in the Chinese University of Hong Kong observed a significantly lower rate of return with email (6%) compared with mail (27%). Undertaken as part of project for the Henley Center for Media Futures, a subsequent study by Comley and his associates (1996) effectively split the difference in the preceding studies' outcomes. On the one hand, Comley observed a "major time advantage for email over postal methods" with his targeted population of readers of an Internet magazine. On the other, he received a somewhat lower response rate by email (13.5%) than by post (15.4%), despite the fact the email group were sent reminders. Without it, Comley offers, the response rate would have been a mere 12.6%.

While more recent studies do not dispute the potential savings in time achieved by electronic mail survey, they do take a different view of the assumed savings in cost. In a pilot study conducted on behalf of the Census Bureau, Nichols and Sedivi (1998) attempted to obtain economic data from a number of companies using a Computerized Self-Administered Questionnaire (CSAQ) which resided on a government server. In a manner similar to a Survey-to Disk technology, respondents given the URL (Uniform Resource Locator) of the CSAQ which they then accessed over the web with the correct username and password. Unfortunately, the authors soon discovered that the complexity of the coding (a mix of HTML and Javascript) greatly limited the number of respondents who could simply access the CSAQ. Still worse, in cases where the respondents were more fully and correctly equipped to work with the CSAQ, the help desk was deluged with calls that often

referenced browser configuration problems but more typically concerned mistyped URLs and lost usernames and passwords. As the number of CSAQ reporters who phoned in with difficulties topped 56%, Nichols and Sedivi were led to question whether the method -- or at the least the software -- was viable "as the volume of calls could not be handled in a production setting" (p. 3): if nothing else, the man-hours involved would render the per unit cost of the survey prohibitively expensive. Based on their experiences, Nichols and Sedivi concluded their study with a call for more research as both "[t]he response rate and the help desk findings suggest that there are different issues of motivation and assistance not present in paper questionnaires" (p. 7). While their initial screening of respondents suggested that there issues of coverage issues were also salient, still Nichols and Sedivi "found enough positive respondent reaction to continue to pursue collecting data using the Web (p. 7).

Similar technical difficulties dogged and concomitant "help desk" overload attended an email/mail comparison conducted by Couper, Blair, and Triplett (1998). Unlike earlier modal studies, this particular comparison was not confined to a single organization but rather spanned several statistical agencies of the Federal Government. While employees within each agencies were known to have email access, the peculiarities of each of the agencies' mail systems -- which ranged from Lotus CC: Mail to Novell Groupwise to WPMail and which differed, in turn, from the author's own system (Pegasus Mail) -- altered transmission just enough significantly to drive down response rate and markedly to drive up calls for assistance. In all, the authors noted that they "handled over 900 incoming toll free calls regarding the survey, most of them ... technical questions about email" (p. 9) and concluded that when added to "large start-up costs," the per piece cost of the email survey was more expensive than regular mail given the response rate. While maintaining that "[e]mail clearly offers a lot of promise," Couper, Blair, and Triplett finally advise that, in their experience, "technical difficulties need to be overcome before [it] can be used routinely for surveys of large and diverse populations across multiple organizations" (p. 9).

Description of the present study

Although the present study is more focused on the web as a medium for survey research than email, it nevertheless resembles the Couper et al. investigation in several respects. First, it too was embedded in a larger study that was concerned with organizational climate. Second, front-end changes had to be made in the design of the study when it was discovered that the organizational infrastructure was uncongenial to its conduct. In the Couper et al. study, their original intent was to use email messages that were HTML-based and that functioned much like an Internet form. At the eleventh hour, however, the authors were forced to forgo the Graphical User Interface (GUI) of HTML-based messaging in favor of a more awkward and unattractive ASCII-based

solution that, for all its flaws, was still the lowest common denominator.

As stated above, the study's initial plan was to compare conventional paper-and-pencil methods with several others produced by an inexpensive, off-the-shelf software package called *Survey Solutions for the Web*. As the name of the product suggests, the primary purpose of the software is to generate the requisite HTML and cgi-code for online surveys that are both single page (as opposed to those consisting of multiple screens) and noncomplex (i.e., without elaborate branching or "piping" based on user responses). At the same time, the product can render the same questionnaire in several other formats that are email-based. These formats include both the aforementioned ASCII- and HTML-based messaging types, as well as CSAQs that can be administered on disk or attached to an email message and subsequently run on the user's own computer (run-time email).

While run-time email was quickly eliminated as being too complex for most of the intended respondents to handle, high hopes were maintained for the other methods until pilot testing indicated otherwise. As in the Couper et al study, problems with the email system -- Lotus Notes Mail -- immediately ruled out both email forms. When ASCII-based email was attempted, Lotus Notes transformed the file into a continuous stream of text that was unreadable: a peculiarity of Lotus that was confirmed when the software vendor itself attempted to survey this writer. Likewise, HTML-based email was eliminated after various tries with Netscape's "send page" command. Expectedly, use of this option placed the questionnaire in the body of the email message in a format resembling a online form. Unexpectedly, however, recipients of the email message were treated to a questionnaire with the submit button gone and all response controls -- radio buttons and text buttons -- omitted.

With the preceding choices eliminated, the only viable methods that could be compared included the diskette CSAQ and the web-based questionnaire. Because the diskette CSAQ required some release of Windows (either '95, '98, or 2000), it was shelved for later testing in environments where this particular platform was the de-facto standard. Although the decision was made to proceed with the web questionnaire -- the only option remaining -- here too problems surfaced. To control access to the survey, respondents were asked to click on URL link in the body of an email message. So doing would then activate the respondent's web browser -- typically either release 3.x or 4.x of Netscape -- which would then open upon an introductory page. Once there, a flag or "cookie" would be written to the respondent's hard drive to discourage multiple submissions during the survey period and then the survey would itself appear in a second window after 10 seconds.

Written in the simplest dialect of Javascript, these added security features seemed to work flawlessly in pilot testing with

all browser versions -- both Netscape and Internet Explorer -- numbered 3.0 or above. What pilot testing also revealed, however, was that, on a significant number of workstations and seemingly at random, Lotus Notes had been improperly configured. Rather than Netscape -- the organization's standard -- Lotus was instead set up to employ some other browser either unimplemented by the system (Lotus's own web navigator) or present on the respondent's hard drive (Internet Explorer) but not configured for Internet access.

After further investigation proved that this was indeed the primary source of the difficulty, it was nevertheless decided to proceed with the study despite the additional level of complexity introduced and inconvenience to the respondent entailed. For those respondents directed to the web, instructions had to be rewritten (and much lengthened) both to alert them to the problem and to offer them another, insecure mode of access that involved evoking Netscape manually. In addition, the instructions also included an offer to help the respondent "fix" Lotus Notes, if desired, by contacting the author by phone. At the onset of the study, none of these instructions were, however, written down or distributed to either the "control" or the experimental respondent groups.

Sampling Procedures

With "customer satisfaction" being the substance of the study, all district principals of those schools having regular contact with the central office unit in question were defined as the target population. Subsequent to this in-house screening procedure, 160 principals were selected and randomly assigned to one of the two conditions, using a combination of the SAS "uniform" function -- which assigns random numbers -- and the SAS procedure "PROC RANK" -- which sorts the respondents into a specified number of groups based on the rank order of the random numbers. After a general memo describing the study's content and form was released, two members each of both groups were asked not to be considered given their interim administrative status and their inability to respond to survey fully. Thus, with these four potential respondents screened (there may, in fact, have been others who did not take the trouble to contact the office), both "control" and "experimental" groups were of equal size, consisting of 78 members each.

Survey Design and Structure

Concerned with "the quality of services rendered to schools by the Office of Research and Evaluation," both paper and electronic forms of the questionnaire were kept brief. Each was divided into three major sections having their own instructions. In Part I, responding principals were asked to rate eleven unit behaviors on a continuous scale, according to each behavior's perceived frequency of occurrence. Both the width of the scale and the content of the first four items were expressly designed to

recall "the Competing Values Organizational Effectiveness Instrument" (Quinn, 1988) that had been previously administered to all unit members as a vehicle for intra-departmental discussion and self-study. In their turn, these four "between unit" items were supplemented with seven other "within-unit" ones that emerged from a tally of unit member's reactions to a series of customer satisfaction prompts. In an open forum, unit members -- whether clerical or administrative -- elaborated on their choices, suggesting specifics to be used in item development. When a set of seven core issues were agreed-upon, the author crafted the items and resubmitted these to unit members for any corrections and additions.

While the items constituting Part I of the survey were concerned with customer needs, those making up Parts II and III were directed at customer wants and preferences. Arrived at in the forum described above, the four Part II items were phrased as open-ended questions and sought information about improving specific unit products -- its workshops, written materials, and website -- and general commentary on the unit. Concluding the survey, the items constituting Part III were concerned with an office "stretch goal": an unlooked-for, unrequested service that the unit could provide that might "surprise and delight customers" (Cameron & Quinn, 1999). Underwritten by a "continuous improvement" or "kaizen" approach to service quality, these last few items were somewhat obliquely stated but designed to complement the TQM perspectives addressed in Parts I and II where manifest customer needs and felt customer preferences were, respectively, expressed.

In both surveys, a final, single item was devoted to the modal aspect of the study. Regardless of their group status, all respondents were asked to rate the level of convenience of completing a survey online. While the content of both forms of the item was the same, the phrasing differed such that the "experimental" group was asked about an experience that they just had, while the "control" group was probed about an experience they might have in the future.

Results of the Modal Study

Similar to findings in previous studies, most respondents seemed to approve of the idea of electronic surveying despite technical difficulties. Indeed, one principal who had to be contacted by phone because of a failure of the infrastructure -- that is, non-delivery caused by the system hardware, not the Lotus Notes software -- told this writer than if principals had to "keep on doing these surveys, then this was the way to do them." In terms of the actual percentages and discounting two missing "control" group responses, exactly 63.5% (n =47) believed the process of online surveying to be either "much more convenient" or "more convenient" than the conventional method, some 20.3% (n = 15) were indifferent as to mode, and only 16.4% (n = 12) found

enough flaws in the new modality to rate it as "less convenient" or "much less convenient" than paper-and-pencil. Interestingly, on this particular directed response item as well as the eleven others, no effect by delivery mode was observed.

Nevertheless, the Lotus Notes issue outlined above seemed to have the expected devastating impact on response rate. While the combined returns were poor -- a mere 76 out of a possible 156 or only 48.7% -- those garnered via the web were especially so. Where almost 63% of the "control" group responded to the questionnaire without follow-up, only some 37% did so online. While these findings are coincident with those of others previously described, on a more positive note, so were speed of response findings. Before a single posted response had been received from the "control" group, some 21 of the 29 ultimately obtained from the "experimental" group -- or roughly 72% -- were already in hand. When written directions on configuring Lotus Notes were ultimately circulated, the remaining online responses received were obtained within the space of two days.

Conclusion

In historical perspective, it took all of four centuries for textual literacy to attain near universality and several decades for the telephone to become a taken-for-granted household fixture. When looked at in this way, it is hardly surprising, then, that email- and web-based methods of surveying individuals might take some time to mature.

As this and earlier studies suggest, an array of technical difficulties presently complicate valid studies conducted online, resulting in higher error rates in coverage and in nonresponse. Until the technology matures, it is recommended that researchers invest in multi-modal approaches, mixing methods like paper, email, and web surveying with little consideration for differences between venues. While responding to an online survey may indeed entail what Dillman (1998) refers to as "computer logic" as well as "questionnaire logic," this may be a difference bound for one without distinction as the online community grows, as computer literacy increases, and as communication across the Internet becomes a universal fact of everyday life.

Addenda: Pilot Studies Two and Three

The qualified success of the preceding study prompted further examination of electronic surveying by other means, with different populations, or both. In a second modal study that involved three different forms of block scheduling currently operating in the Memphis City Schools, a version of the CSAQ output by the *Survey Solutions for the Web* software was used in questioning faculty about the advantages and disadvantages of the block under one of three different plans: the Alternate Day Plan, 10 Day Rotation

Plan, and the "semestering" or 4 X 4 Plan. Given the prevalance of the "Windows machine" at all of the district's secondary schools and the fact that the generated CSAQ was specific to the Windows platform, the decision was made to proceed with this second modal study, pending principals' declaration of ready access to computers by faculty. After this had been established, a master copy of the survey-to-disk was used to mass produce approximately 500 copies -- this number including a "fudge factor" in the instance of bad copies or underestimates of faculty size -- and the individual copies placed in individual mailers. Also containing a page of written instructions, these individual mailers were then boxed up and mailed by schools to schools at the end of March 2000. Because of the intervening "spring break," principals and faculty members were told that all returns were expected by the end of April 2000. To simplify data collection, principals were asked to appoint a survey administrator to oversee the initial distribution, ongoing collection, and subsequent return of all instruments completed at the school together. Moreover, it was requested that unused materials be separated from used ones and returned in a second box designated specifically for that purpose.

Based on estimated faculty size, the response rate of usable CSAQs was observed to vary markedly by school, with three of the nine schools returning little more than 50% of the instruments completed, but with others with a completion rate in excess of 70%. In the aggregate, this "observed response rate" was roughly 76% of the "estimated response rate" (N = 342). In counting simply unused and uncompleted instruments, it was further estimated than in excess of 90% of the materials sent -- disks and mailers -- had been returned in re-usable condition.

As to respondent reactions, building-level principals and survey admininstrators indicated that faculty, generally speaking, "had no trouble" with the format. Indeed, some even indicated their preference for it, mentioning the attractiveness of the user-interface, the additional level of confidentiality afforded, and/or the additional space for open-ended commentary allowed. Of more than 700 such open-ened comments obtained, only one -- a negative one -- made reference to the alternative mode of presentation. For this individual, the type was too small, perhaps a function of his/her screen resolution.

Returning to the web-based form, a final modal study that was conducted at the end of the academic year 1999-2000 investigated the ability of elementary school children to obtain access to and interact with an electronic questionnaire. Both the regional accreditation process and "data-driven school improvement" notion recommend that student perceptual data be gathered, the latter on a regular basis. To determine whether such data might be more easily collected used electronic means, a "canned" survey was converted into html, decorated with attractive graphics, and uploaded to the web. After one K-6 school consented to participate in the pilot, a sample of students were systematically selected

from each class in grades 3 through 6, the total representing about 20% of the entire student body. Class by class, five or six children were escorted to the library at a time and then seated at a computer where the questionnaire's introductory page was up and running. With some help from the researcher and -- in one instance, some on-the-spot assistance from the school's ESL teacher -- all sampled students were able to complete the questionnaire successfully. Afterwards, students addressed a two-item questionnaire asking how much they had liked the electronic format compared to the usual way of answering on paper. No doubt due in significant measure to the "novelty" effect, the results were 100% in favor of the electronic form Indeed, not a few students suggested that they do all of their "tests" like that, "because its 'funer.'"

What was most indicative of the method's usefulness in the "data-driven school improvement" process, however, was the principal's reaction to the survey's "turn-around time." The survey finished early on a Friday afternoon, the data were quickly downloaded into the *Survey Solutions* program for initial processing and then into SPSS for the analysis. A printout was available for the principal's inspection the following Monday morning, and the results were used two days later as part of the discussion at an end-of-year faculty meeting.

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APPENDIX:

EXHIBITS OF MATERIALS USED

Unit code number goes here.
Return address is printed on
the back of the form.

MCS UNIT PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT TOOL

(based on the competing values framework)

Listed below are sixteen statements that describe organizational performance. You should indicate **how often** they occur in your unit. Please use the following scale to respond to each statement. Place a number from 1 (meaning very infrequently) to 7 (meaning very frequently) in the space just before each of the items. Return this form to the the Office of Research & Evaluation by XX/XX/XX.

VeryInfrequently ← 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 → VeryFrequently

_____ 1. The work process is coordinated and under control.

_____ 2. Employees influence unit agenda-setting and decision-making.

_____ 3. Rules, procedures, and formal methods guide the work.

_____ 4. The goals are clearly understood by most members.

_____ 5. The work effort may be described as intense.

_____ 6. There is a stable, predictable work environment.

_____ 7. Innovation is emphasized.

_____ 8. There is a positive interpersonal climate.

_____ 9. Quantification and measurement are key parts of the work climate.

_____ 10. Consensual decision-making is encouraged.

_____ 11. Outsiders perceive it as a vibrant, high potential unit.

_____ 12. Creative insights, hunches, and innovative ideas are encouraged.

_____ 13. It is easy to give an explanation of the overall objectives of the unit.

_____ 14. Increasing productivity is a unit priority.

_____ 15. Employees feel as though they really belong to the unit.

_____ 16. The unit has the image of a dynamic, growing system.

I. **According to MCS salary schedule criteria, my position may best be described as:**

A. Administrative **B. Clerical** **C. Other** _____ (pleasespecify)

II. **My position involves managing the work of others:**

A. YES, it does. **B. NO, it does not.**

CUSTOMER SERVICE AUDIT 2000:
SERVICE DELIVERY PROMPTS

Using the prompts listed below -- not all of which are applicable to our office --circle the top six that you consider the most important with regard to the products/services that we render or might render to schools. The prompts you select could reference some
(1) basic customer **requirement** or **need** addressed by our office;
(2) some unmet but known customer **preference** or **want** that we ought to address; or
(3) some existing product or service presently offered by us that could be **enhanced** in some small way.

In light of these perceived (1) needs, (2) preferences and (3) potential ehancements, use the prompts you selected to suggest three possible items we could use in developing a short customer satisfaction instrument. On the back of this sheet, write these in the blanks provided.

accessible
accurate
after-delivery service
alternatives
attentive
attractive
authentic
available
available inventory
careful
caring
cheerful
clean
comfortable
committed
competitive
concerned
consistent
convenient
cost-effective
courteous
creative
customized
dedicated
dependable
discreet
easy to do business with
easy to locate
easy to use
effective
efficient
elegant
empathic
entertaining
exciting
expensive
experienced
experts
extra amenities
fair
fast
flexible
friendly
healthy
helpful
homey
honest
industry leaders
influential
innovative
interesting
intimate
knowledgeable
large in size
leading-edge technology
listens
low cost
medium in size
moderate in cost
modern
on time
personal
pleasant
pleasurable
private
professional
quick
quiet
relaxing
reliable
respectful
responsible
responsive
reputation for excellence
safe
serious
sincere
skilled
small in size
special
stimulating
technical support
timeliness
tranquil
trustworthy
understanding
unique
up-scale
warm
well-known
well-planned
well-stocked

CUSTOMER SERVICE AUDIT 2000

Quality of Service Delivery Worksheet for

Your Name: _____

Name of Unit : _____

What areas of customer **need** are addressed by our office?

Here the emphasis is on meeting basic customer needs and requirements in order to reduce customer dissatisfaction and minimize complaints.

AREAS I: _____

_____

_____

_____

Regarding our products/services, what are some customer **wants** ?

Here the emphasis is less on the standard requirements of customers than on their preferences and expectations. A more proactive way of thinking about service quality, the goal is not to find and fix errors but to head them off.

AREAS II: _____

_____

_____

_____

Quality Concern III: What product/service enhancements could our office provide that would **surprise and delight** our customers?

Typical of some of the best firms in the 1990s, the emphasis here is on coupling continuous improvement — sometimes referred to as "kaizen" — with innovation so that current standards of performance are in a state of constant evolution.

AREAS III: _____

_____

_____

_____

SERVICE DELIVERY PROMPTS
TALLIES OF RESPONSES

S.D. PROMPT	DC	LU	LF	BG	DG	VG	LJ	GK	LM	JN	BW	TOT
ACCURATE			1	1	1	1	1		1	1	1	8
TIMELINESS		1		1		1	1	1	1	1		7
RESPONSIVE		1	1	1				1		1		5
HELPFUL	1		1	1		1						4
PROFESSIONAL					1			1	1	1		4
TECH SUPPORT			1	1				1			1	4
EFFICIENT					1			1	1			3
KNOWLEDGABLE			1	1		1						3

S.D. PROMPT	DC	LU	LF	BG	DG	VG	LJ	GK	LM	JN	BW	TOT
COURTEOUS		1					1					2
CUSTOMIZED								1	1			2
DEPENDABLE		1					1					2
EASY TO DO BUSINESS W/		1					1					2
FAST		1					1					2
FLEXIBLE					1						1	2
RELIABLE					1	1						2
LISTENS	1		1									2
REPUTATION/EXCELLENCE	1										1	2

S.D. PROMPT	DC	LU	LF	BG	DG	VG	LJ	GK	LM	JN	BW	TOT
ACCESSIBLE						1						1
AUTHENTIC	1											1
CLEAR* (added)											1	1
CONSISTENT										1		1
EASY TO USE								1				1
EFFECTIVE	1											1
EXPERTS											1	1
INNOVATIVE										1		1
MODERATE IN COST					1							1
ON TIME	1											1
UNDERSTANDING									1			1

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION QUESTIONNAIRE

OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

Divided into three parts, the following questionnaire concerns the the quality of services rendered to schools by the Office of Research and Evaluation. In Part I you are asked to **rate the frequency** with which office behaviors or products evidence a concern for quality. Using the seven-point scale below -- where 1 means very infrequently and 7 means very frequently -- mark a number in the blank next to each of the 11 statements.

VeryInfrequently ← 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 → VeryFrequently

_____ 1. Facilitating the educational mission of the district and its schools is a clear office priority.

_____ 2. Routine transactions with the office are marked by miminal red tape and maximum efficiency.

_____ 3. In my dealings with them, office staff members appear courteous, competent, and concerned.

_____ 4. The search for ways to improve its products and services is characteristic of this office.

_____ 5. When I have an immediate need for information, my request is promptly handled.

_____ 6. When I telephone, satisfactory answers to my questions are provided either by the secretary or the first administrative staff member on the line.

_____ 7. Office memoranda, directions, and other written documents directed at schools are clear, consise, and readily understandable.

_____ 8. Office reports about district conditions or various projects and initiatives within the district contain useful information for school-level planning and decision making.

_____ 9. Office policies and procedures for completing and returning tests, questionnaires, and other sensitive materials are easy to comply with.

_____ 10. Office-sponsored workshops enhance my school's capacity for data-driven improvement of our instructional program.

_____ 11. Technical support in doing, accessing, and understanding educational research and evaluation is available on demand.

PART II. Write a brief response to the following open-ended questions.

12. The development of what sorts of research-oriented or data analtyic skills should drive future workshops?

13. What additional data sources ought to be included in the MCS "School Profiles" to increase its usefulness?

14. To reduce its present length and complexity, what, if any, information appearing in the MCS "School Profiles" ought to be eliminated?

15. What are some topics and/or resources that should be available online though the departmental website?

16. Other comments? (use additional sheets as necessary)

PART III: Indicate your preference with respect to potential Office "stretch goals."

17. Would be it be more or less convenient for you to complete a survey like this online?

More! **Less!** **Neither!**

18. The office is considering the use of spreadsheet templates to help automate the computational aspects of the school improvement planning process:

What is your computer platform? **PC** **Macintosh**

What spreadsheet program do you normally use?

Program _____ Version Number _____

office of research and evaluation secure online survey

survey administrator: Lou Franceschini

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION QUESTIONNAIRE

(Office of Research & Evaluation)

Divided into three parts, the following twenty-item questionnaire concerns the quality of services rendered to schools by the **Office of Research and Evaluation (OR&E)**.

In **Part I**, you are asked to rate the frequency with which Office behaviors, products, and services evidence a concern for quality. In **Part II**, you are invited to suggest ways that current OR&E products and services might be made more useful. In **Part III**, you are presented with proposed improvements in Office products and services and asked to provide feedback.

PART I: DIRECTIONS

On a continuous scale that ranges from 1 to 7 -- where a value of **"1"** means **Very Infrequently** and a value of **"7"** means **Very Frequently**, as seen in the figure below --

Very Infrequently ← 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 → Very Frequently

tell how often each of the following 11 statements is true. To record your answer, click the radio button corresponding to the value.

1. Facilitating the educational mission of the district and its schools seems to be a clear priority in the Office of Research & Evaluation.

1 Very Infrequently
2 --
3 -

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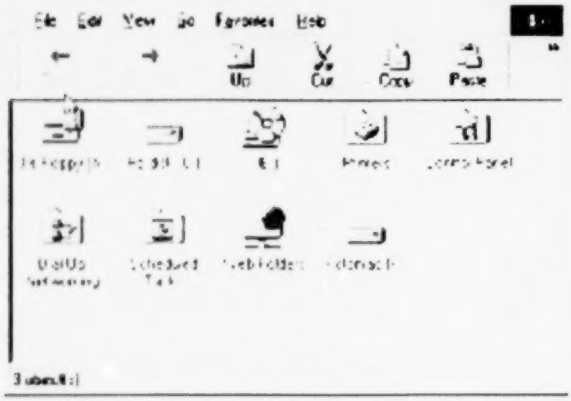
GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS: SURVEY-TO-DISK

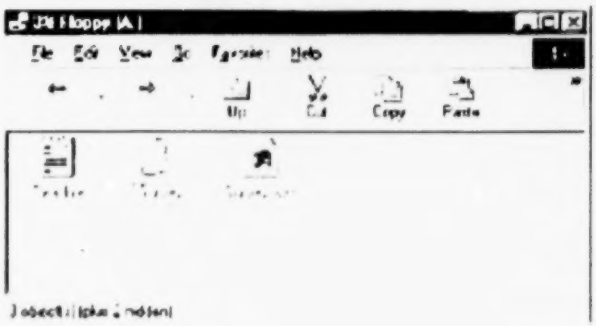
PRELIMINARY – To begin the SURVEY-TO-DISK process, start the PC and allow Microsoft Windows to load completely. Once Windows is fully in the computer's active memory, **THEN** insert the Survey-to-Disk in the 3 1/2 inch floppy disk drive. Because this disk drive is the one that PCs always search first, it is conventionally known as the "A:" drive.



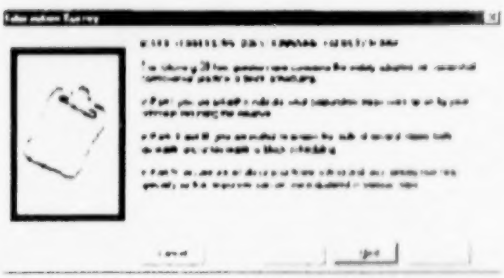
(1) Once the floppy disk is seated in disk drive "A:", look for the Windows desktop icon called **"MY COMPUTER."** This icon is usually located in the topmost position, in the upper-left hand corner of the screen.

Once found, double-click on the **"MY COMPUTER"** icon to open up a window like that at the immediate left. Through this portal, the user can gain access to resources important to the entire computer system.

(2) One potential resource depicted in the **"MY COMPUTER"** window is the contents of the disk placed in the 3 1/2 disk drive. Double-clicking on that drive's icon will reveal the contents of the inserted disk in a new window.

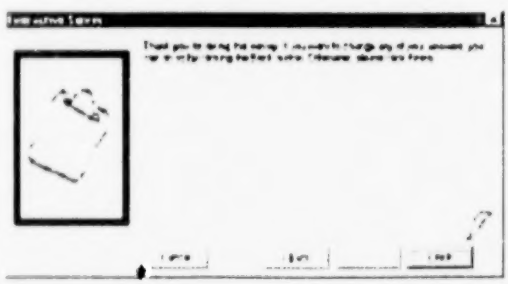


(3) On an unused Survey-to-Disk, three icons will appear in this new window -- the critical one being the one labeled **SURVEY**. After double-clicking on **SURVEY's** clipboard icon, the disk drive will whirr...



(4) ... and you'll see the opening screen of the faculty survey. The text provides general directions for responding to the survey's sixty-five items. The buttons below the text are for navigational purposes. Throughout the survey, the **NEXT** button will move you forward one screen. The **BACK** button will return you to the preceding screen. Use of the **BACK** button allows you to review and/or change an earlier answer.

(5) Although you may quit the survey at any time by pressing the **CANCEL** button, no responses will be recorded until you reach the last screen. Here the **FINISH** button finally becomes active, its power signaled by the lightening bolt. Pressing the **FINISH** button writes your preceding responses to a document on disk and takes you out of the completed survey in an orderly fashion.



Questions about the survey to disk may be directed to **Mr. Lou Franceschini** in the Office of Research and Evaluation by phone **(325-5450)** or by email **(franceschinil@memphis-schools.k12.tn.us)**

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In the **A. B. Hill Student Survey**, there are 30 short sentences that concern how you might feel when you are at school. Choose your answer to each sentence by clicking on one of the buttons.

If you want to change your answer, click another button. To see more sentences, use the scroll bar at the right of the screen. Now let's begin!

#1. When I am at school, I feel... I belong.

- ○ 1. Agree very much
- ○ 2. Agree
- ○ 3. Agree a little
- ○ 4. Disagree a little
- ○ 5. Disagree
- ○ 6. Disagree very much

#2. When I am at school, I feel... I am safe.

- ○ 1. Agree very much
- ○ 2. Agree
- ○ 3. Agree a little
- ○ 4. Disagree a little
- ○ 5. Disagree
- ○ 6. Disagree very much

#3. When I am at school, I feel... I have fun learning.

- ○ 1. Agree very much
- ○ 2. Agree
- 3. Agree a little
- 4. Disagree a little
- 5. Disagree
- 6. Disagree very much